

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE~~  
~~EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY~~

September 6, 1972

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: Ambassador Huang Hua, PRC Ambassador to the UN  
Mrs. Shih Yen-hua, Interpreter  
Peter W. Rodman, NSC Staff

DATE AND TIME: Wednesday, September 6, 1972, 7:20-7:45 p.m.

PLACE: PRC Mission to the UN, New York City

The Ambassador said he had two messages for me. I started to take out a note pad, but he said there was no need. He handed me the two messages [a long reply to our communications of August 28 and 30, at Tab A, and a short inquiry about Senator Mansfield's proposed visit, Tab B] and asked me to read them through. I did so, and said I would see that these were reported to Dr. Kissinger immediately. The Ambassador said he had nothing additional to convey.

The meeting was as cordial as ever. He asked about Dr. Kissinger's travel plans, and I mentioned that he would be leaving Saturday morning for Munich instead of Friday morning as originally planned and would be seeing German leaders but not attending the Olympics. I said I understood an appointment had been set up for Friday between Dr. Kissinger and the Ambassador. I commented that Dr. Kissinger very much wanted to see the Ambassador before he left on his trip. The Ambassador understood it would be at the former location, and I said yes, that was my understanding. The Ambassador said, "Dr. Kissinger is delaying his departure in order to come here?" I simply repeated that Dr. Kissinger very much wanted to see the Ambassador before he left.

We had one cup of tea, and I thanked the Ambassador for his hospitality but said I didn't want to keep him any longer.

Attachments

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Handed to Rodman by  
Ambassador Huang, 9/6/72

The Chinese side has the following comments with regard to the three U.S. messages of August 28 and 30, 1972:

1. From the U.S. messages it seems that the U.S. side thinks it has the right to blockade and bomb the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam and attack vessels or vehicles of all kinds transporting supplies to Viet Nam. This stand cannot possibly be accepted by China. Such actions of the U.S. side are an encroachment upon the sovereignty of other countries and a violation of the freedom of international trade and navigation, and run counter to the principles jointly affirmed by both sides in the Sino-U.S. Joint Communiqué. It must be pointed out that, like violations of the Chinese border, attacks on Chinese ships cannot be tolerated. Chinese ships are transporting supplies to the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam; this is China's sovereign right and no other country has the right to intervene.

2. None of the elements that were described as leading to the August 22 incident in two of the U.S. messages conform to the actual facts. We recognize that the U.S. Government has made investigations on all the incidents raised in the charges and protests lodged by us. But the answers have generally been words of regret from above but allegations from below that there was cause for raising the matters but no conclusive evidence after investigations. Anyway, as the U.S. side on many occasions stated that incidents such as those

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raised by China would not be permitted to reoccur, in every case involving infringement of China's sovereignty and harm or loss of Chinese lives, it was not until the evidence was found to be truly reliable through repeated verifications that we advanced charges against the U.S. side. For instance, from 0804 hours, July 15, 1972 (local time), one U.S. aircraft intruded for three minutes into the Changcheng area, Hainan Island, China. Having ascertained that it was really a tanker aircraft and that the weather was bad, we lodged no protest with the U.S. side. During his meeting with Ambassador Huang on July 26, Dr. Kissinger also attested the fact that this incident indeed occurred. And at the same meeting, Dr. Kissinger mentioned incidents of Chinese ships firing at U.S. aircraft. We had given strict orders that no firing was permissible unless attacked or bombed. Precisely because of this, and because the August 22 case had been found so serious through verification, we could not but have recourse to an open protest. It is regrettable that in the investigation report delivered on August 30, the U.S. side continues to allege that the boat was a logistic craft rather than a lifeboat. We hereby point out:

a. That the lifeboat was flying the national flag of the People's Republic of China was a fact. The flag should logically have been identified since the U.S. side admitted

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in its message that the U.S. aircraft made two low level identification passes before the bombing. The said flag (66cm x 44cm) as well as parts of the bombed boat have now been recovered from the water. Such factual evidence cannot be denied.

b. The lifeboat was not carrying any cargo, it only had one box (34cm x 33cm x 12.5cm) of film reels which were to be shown to the seamen. Obviously, this can hardly be taken as proof that the boat was a "logistic craft".

c. When the boat was bombed, it was moving between the two Chinese merchant ships (Hongqi Nos. 160 and 151), at a distance of 1,970 meters from the shore. The location alleged by the U.S. side was inaccurate. For the U.S. side to surmise that the boat was a "logistic craft" on the basis of the alleged location of the boat between the shore line and Hon Ngu Island, the inshore area being mined, is indeed far-fetched.

The U.S. side has now admitted that photography on August 19 and 25 prove that the Chinese merchant ship "Hongqi 151" originally carried two lifeboats, of which one has been missing since the bombing. Yet, the U.S. side has tried to create an excuse by asserting that there was no flag so as to shirk responsibility. The Chinese side cannot but express deep regret at this.

3. The U.S. side is clear about the Chinese Government's stand on the Indochina question. The Chinese side has on more

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than one occasion stated that so long as the war continues, no matter in what form, China will firmly support and assist the Indochinese people in their war of resistance to the end. The Chinese side has said frankly many times that the U.S. persistence in its bombing and mining of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam and in the "Vietnamization" of the war would definitely be of no help to an early ending of the conflict. On the contrary, it will only drag on the conflict and tie the U.S. Government itself down in an unfavourable position. The Chinese side hopes that on the question of Indochina, the U.S. Government would consider the problem in a broader framework and take the long view, give vigilant consideration to the existence of the other outside force, and withdraw at an early date all armed forces of the United States and its followers from Indochina and first of all from Viet Nam, and let the three Indochinese peoples solve their own problems by themselves. The Chinese side has on many questions made allowance for the circumstances the U.S. Government is in now. However, the responsibility for the expansion of the conflict in Indochina does not lie with our side. We have no alternative but to adhere to principles.

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On another subject, will it not affect your bi-partisan relationship if Mansfield comes alone for a visit? Samdech Sihanouk has expressed that Mansfield's speech in the Senate is not acceptable. Please tell us explicitly whether there is any other intention in Mansfield's proposed visit, so that a reply may be considered.